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REPORT ON THE CROATIAN BOSNIAN TOUR OF THE CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

Ottawa, March 15 - 22, 1998

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103-07670/

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National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)

Report on the Croatian Bosnian Tour of the Canadian Parliamentary System Ottawa, Canada March 15 to March 22, 1998

A Project in cooperation with Canadian International Development Agency and the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development

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Introduction:

Karen Gainer, Director of Political Party Program for NDI Croatia together with Sarah Jenkins, Director of Political Party Field Training for NDI Bosnia lead a delegation of young political party leaders and organizers from both Bosnia & Herzegovina and Croatia to Ottawa the week of March 15 1998. The purpose of the trip was fourfold.

1. To introduce the delegation to the Parliamentary leaders and their political party officers and to the various political parties of Canada. It is intended that these meetings would be informal to allow the delegation to learn how the Canadian multiparty system functions in reality.
2. To provide them with an opportunity to meet members of the Parliamentary Press gallery-to understand the role of an independent media and the relationship that exists between the political parties and members of the media. Specifically to introduce them to the role of the CBC as a public broadcasting media as separate from a state run media or private media.
3. To meet with members of Elections Canada, The Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Supreme Court of Canada to learn how institutions shape the democratic culture of a nation.
4. To observe the Liberal Party Bi-Annual convention. This was to give the delegation an opportunity to see how a national political party consults with and takes direction from the rank and file of the party.

The Agenda for the program can be found at page 15 of this report.

The project was made possible by the support of the Canadian Embassy in Zagreb, and in particular Ambassador Donald Smith. Funding was provided by the Canadian International Development Agency and The Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development (CCFPD). The program in Ottawa was organized by the CCFPD under the direction of and support of Steven Lee, Director of the Centre and his staff, in particular Marie Joelle Dulude, Michael Shaughnessy and Shawna Christianson from Minister Axworthy's office.

NDI

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a non governmental, non partisan Washington based organization which was established in 1983 to strengthen democratic institutions and pluralistic values in new and emerging democracies.

NDI has been working with political parties in Croatia since the fall of 1995 and in Bosnia

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Hercergovina since the spring of 1996. NDI has field offices in Zagreb, Croatia; within the Bosnia Federation in Sarajevo and Tuzula and in the Republic of Srpska in Banja Luka.

NDI's political party programs in Croatia and Bosnia were designed to strengthen the political parties and to assist them to reach out to citizens. The purpose of the party outreach was to restore the populace's credibility in the electoral system and provide citizens with an avenue to express themselves in a free and democratic society.

NDI's political party program in Croatia over the last year has focused on working with the parties at the local level to reach out to citizens and include them in the work of their party. Using tools such as citizen questionnaires and party newsletters, party volunteers have gone door to door to develop party membership and to position the parties as political activists who are interested in and responsive to the needs of their voters.

The NDI political party field training program in Bosnia Hercergovina was developed to train six local people to become political party organizers.These Regional Field Coordinators (RFC'c) are presently undergoing a comprehensive training in political organizing and general democratic development. After this training is complete the RFC's will work with the political parties as field organisers.

Selection of Delegates:
The Croatian team was made up of local party leaders who had participated in the NDI training program and one journalist. The political party leaders were selected as a result of the hard work they had done in their respective branch offices to design and locally organize a door knocking campaign. These young people sent out party volunteers with a citizens questionnaire to seek citizens opinions on local and national issues. In many areas of the country this was the first time that political parties had ever gone door to door and directly talked to voters, notwithstanding each party had competed in at least four elections.

The Bosina team was comprised of the six Regional Field Coordinators plus a journalist from Banja Luka. Given that the work of the Regional Field coordinators would be political organising it was felt that they would have the most to gain from the proposed trip to Ottawa.

Complete list of the Delegation can be found at page 16 of this report.

Reflections and experiences
Karen Gainer and Sarah Jenkins as trip leaders asked the participants to report on their experiences of the trip to Canada and what follows is their diary, plus personal observation made by individual participants.

Canada Diary *by Tanja Kremenovic, Vanja Malidzan, Danijela Dabic from Banja Luka.*

Day 1

On our first day in Canada, Sunday, March 15, we went to the Museum of Civilizations where we received a short briefing from Mr. Lee on history of Canada, its culture and traditions. The briefing helped us to get a better understanding of the historical background of the problems that modern Canadian society is facing today (First Nations, New Settlers, immigrants, Franco phones vs. Anglophone...). He also shared insights on the Canadian political system, parties and important political issues that we should be aware of during our stay.

Day 2

Our first official meeting was with Mr. Lee and his colleagues from CCFPD which is a relatively new institution in Canadian Government. The purpose of the Centre is to assist the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in creating and conducting projects in countries that are of special interest to the Canadian Government. CCFPD was especially interested to hear from us about what projects we thought the Canadian Government could do in our countries.

After that we had interesting meeting with M.P. Ken Epp, from the Reform Party of Canada. The Reform Party is a rightist, nationalist party that is the official opposition to ruling party in Parliament. Most of the support they receive is from the western part of the country. The Reform Party are the most aggressive opponents to Quebec's secessionists and the party is seen as exclusive and intolerant. Even though Mr. Epp. was very moderate in his presentation of the party, his views on issue of Quebec were very radical.

In Parliament we witnessed "Question Period" which was very new and very exciting experience for all of us coming from the countries where any criticism of Government is seen as national treason. It is interesting that every day the Prime minister and members of the Cabinet have to answer all the questions of M.P.s and that this discussion contributes to the total transparency of their work and makes them accountable to the public they represent. That is definitely one of the first conditions for democratic functioning of government institutions. We should adopt similar practice in our country as soon as possible.

We then met with the Minister of Transport, Mr. Collenette, who was the Minister of Defense during the war in Bosnia (from 1993 to 1995). We had many questions for him and we had a good discussion with him about Bosnia. We learned from him that every single document – every piece of paper in every Minister's office is at the disposal for any individual who wants to see it, following the usual request procedure. We could find good use for this practice in our baby-democracies.

At the end of that day we got a chance to experience something we had heard a lot about before – volunteering as a Liberal Party activists. We helped them to prepare some packages for their bi-annual Convention. We could see a good example of people

in high positions within the party doing the same work as other party activists which could be a good lesson for our politicians on how to motivate people to work for you? WELL, WORK WITH THEM! DON'T EXPECT THEM TO WORK INSTEAD OF YOU! (we could, off course, go on but we'll save some of that for our lazy politicians).

Day 3

On Tuesday, we started by meeting the President of the Liberal Party of Canada, Senator Dan Hays. He introduced us to the internal party organization on both national and provincial levels, and to the means of internal party communications. The interesting information was that Provincial Liberal Parties function very independent of one another and of Liberal Party of Canada. That is something particular for Canada, being such a big country, but the message we could pick up was that centralized party organization is not a very smart political investment because the real nature of representative democracy has to stay close to the people it represents. He also explained to us the purpose and functioning of the Senate. The Senate, as an appointed institution is more a part of political tradition than of modern democratic decision making process.

One part of the group got a chance to see Parliament from a different view, the journalist's prospective. They spent the day with journalist Wayne Kondro, correspondent covering the Parliament, and he explained the methods they used in working with politicians. The rest of the group in the meantime met with Leader of New Democratic Party Ms. Alexa McDonough. The meeting was interesting for several reasons: because of the fact that Ms. McDonough is a woman leader of one of the major opposition parties in Canada, as well as the because of the detailed explanation she gave us on the purpose and existence of an opposition party that has no chance of becoming the ruling party. As a left oriented party, the NDP fulfills it's role as the social conscience of Canadian society. Their voters come from the working class so the issues the party deals with are focused on that part of the population. That's a very good example for us and our political parties that still don't see the purpose of finding their target groups and focusing on a few relevant issues in their campaigns. That would also help the parties to differentiate themselves from the other political parties. We are still in situation that all parties have their opinion on every issue which they want to present to every voter.

Day 4

First hours of the working day were used for the meeting with one of the parliamentary parties in Canada – The Progressive Conservative Party (PC) and their National Director Mr. Ross Reid. Mr. Reid is familiar with NDI work, because he worked for NDI in the former Yugoslavia. Interesting item of this meeting was the fact that this party had been the ruling party until 1993, when they suffered a catastrophic defeat. Mr. Ross Reid has the impossible task of reorganizing the party as well as preparing it for next elections. Also, this party is in the center of attention, because their leader Jean Charest is preparing for transfer to Liberal Party in Quebec, where he has a great deal of popularity among Franco phones in Quebec. The PC's is a party that is interesting for us because they are starting from the beginning. In process of

reorganizing, this party plans to focus on voter contact and volunteers, because, as Mr. Ross Reid said: "If we win, success is not in this building, success is in the field."

The second meeting of the day was one of the most interesting in whole of our trip. That was the meeting with separatist party Block Québécois and their representative Mr. Daniel Turp. Everything that happened in former Yugoslavia is very similar to the current events in Quebec. The meeting was too short to ask Mr. Turp all questions we had. He was unable to explain to us the real reasons for separation nor offer any concrete solutions for problems, which will appear after separation (if so). These problems are problems for a large percentage of people who want to stay within Canada (Franco phones, Anglophones and Aborigines) and problems of French minority which would stay in some ways unprotected in the rest of Canada.

After lunch, we split into two groups. The first group had a meeting with Aborigine representatives from the First Nations of Canada. This was an opportunity for the aborigine to inform us about status of Indians and the level of respect for their human rights.

The second group visited the School of Journalism at Carleton University. We saw extremely well equipped classrooms in which new TV and radio journalists are educated. Also, we saw whole complex of the University, which was the size of a average city in Republic of Srpska. That gave us an idea for the Canadian Center for Development of Foreign Policy to organize cooperation between Canadian and Bosnian universities, and to help modernizing our universities. This should be a part of whole Bosnian reconstruction process.

Day 5

We appeared as witnesses before the Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs, chaired by Bill Graham, MP. We were able to discuss issues of engagement of Canada in BiH. Committees are usual things in the Canadian political system. The committee is responsible for discussing issues which are put in front of them by the Ministry which need further investigation. The committee was a good example for us of what a multiparty system should look like-given its membership was comprised of representatives from all political parties. It also demonstrated to us the level of transparency of government which provides the possibility for citizens to be involved in solving important issues.

We visited the Supreme Court of Canada, which decides important legal issues. The Canadian court system differs from ours, and that was why we were interested in see how it functioned. We got information about cases that appear in front of this court as well as about court procedures. What we heard in trainings with Sarah we could finally see in practice – Democracy is system which requires a series of checks and balances within the system.

It is interesting that the court is due to answer any questions asked by Parliament. In that case the court has to define the constitutional right of Quebec for separation. The court's decision will be final. On the same day we visited state TV – CBC. Even

though it is a state founded TV, the ruling party does not run it, and sometimes the CBC is the state's biggest critic.

On the same day the Liberal convention was started with meetings of youth and women. Prime Minister Jean Chretien addressed the youth. It was very interesting for several reasons. He spoke simultaneously in English and French to liberal youth about issues they were interested in: employment; school system; student's credits; and the necessity for involving youth in the party's activities as an useful investment in the party's future. This party works on increasing youth and women membership to make it 1/3 of total number.

At the convention, in addition to elections for the national executive for the Liberal Party of Canada, elections were held for the separate commissions: the youth; the women; and the Aborigines. This gave us the opportunity see real campaigns complete with interesting materials. Each of 301 ridings sent delegates which would elect the party's leadership on the national level. That gave a chance for every member of the party on the local level to participate in the election process.

Day 6

After that, we visited Elections Canada. They do the similar job as OSCE in our country. This institution is independent financially and politically. The Chief election officer is elected traditionally by consensus of parliamentary parties and is accountable to the parliament. Their primary job is to organize elections and to update the national voters list, but they also do special projects as increasing the Aboriginal vote and the vote of new Canadians.

Another thing that doesn't exist in our political society are lobbying firms. Their job is to lobby for the interests of their clients (companies and organizations) within governing institutions, using extensive political experience and great knowledge of the system. This is normal in Canada, but it was really new for us. In this business, transparency is absolutely present. Everything is very well known, from who asked for assistance to amount of money have to be paid for representing their interests. The system of checks and balances exists in this job.

We visited the Canadian Human Rights Commission. In a country like Canada, with a long democratic tradition and extremely high level of democracy, human right's disrespect is problem that still exists. In Canada, within the law system there exists a special Tribunal whose basic work is the solving of cases which infringe human rights. For example, there is a problem with Indians in reservations. All of this information can help us to make a good definition of democracy. Democracy is not an instant formula for solving problems overnight, but a process of a society growing up which includes the recognition of mistakes and openness for solving them.

After lunch with the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, we had very useful conversation with him about political events in our country and in Kosovo. He defined the position of the Canadian Government in Republic of Srpska and BiH Federation. He also expressed Canada's willingness to be active and involved in the

building of democratic institutions in our country. We were very interested in the Canadian Government efforts to include the public in creating foreign policy. That's one of the main tasks of CCFPD with whose representatives we met next. In that meeting we gave our ideas and suggestions to the Director of the CCFPD for Canadian future projects in our countries. And we also agreed that we will stay in close contact.

Day 7

The Saturday started with very good NDI presentation by Karen and Sarah to the bi-annual Liberal Convention. The time NDI had was too short for answering all the questions of people present there. The audience in general was very supportive of NDI's work and curious to find out more about it.

We also met with Liberal Party Organizing Director who gave us a detailed explanation of Liberal Party organization. This was most interesting and very helpful. He explained the procedure of electing party representatives to the National and Provincial level. He also gave us a detailed explanation of how the bi-annual convention functions and what it takes to organize it.

Day 8

On the day of our departure, we met with Mr. Stephen Dion, Minister for Canada. His priority is Quebec. His mission is to persuade people from Quebec that Canada is their country and that they can practice all their individual rights within Canadian Federation. He is also trying to explain to them the problems that might appear if Quebec separates.

Our last meeting was with Lord Alderdice, president of the Alliance in Northern Ireland and the vice-president of Liberal International. We had a briefing about Liberal party in Canada and the situation in Northern Ireland.

Individual Comments by members of the Delegation on their experiences, observations and reflections on their trip to Ottawa.

Tanja Kremenović, [Banja Luka, BiH]:

Block Québécois seems to be very frivolous because the words they use so often – "challenge" and "hope" aren't words that should be used in questions related to state and nation.

Zdeslav Matačić Croatian Social Liberal Party(HSLS) Šibenik, Croatia

The meeting with External Affairs showed me the great level of interest of the Canadian Government in Croatia. I was particularly interested in the Canadian Government's idea to help remove land mines in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, because I live in a city located near former front line.

During our visit we had an interesting conversation with the representative of the Bloc Québécois who advocates the independence of the Quebec province. His views were very interesting since I noticed that they were facing many dilemmas, similar to those the Croatian politics faced in the former Yugoslavia during its

building of democratic institutions in our country. We were very interested in the Canadian Government efforts to include the public in creating foreign policy. That's one of the main tasks of CCFPD with whose representatives we met next. In that meeting we gave our ideas and suggestions to the Director of the CCFPD for Canadian future projects in our countries. And we also agreed that we will stay in close contact.

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dissolution.

I'd like to finish this brief report with our visits to the Prime Minister, Minister of External Affairs and Mr. Steven Lee. These meetings helped me understand better how Canadian politicians behave in formal and informal occasions.

Vanja Malidžan, [Banja Luka, BiH]

Another interesting thing was safety on the streets as well as in whole Ottawa. It is hard to see any police officers on the streets, which is evidence that safety could be reached by consciousness respect of all citizens and not by repressive acts. Ministers, Senators and Prime Minister himself freely walk on the streets (or their bodyguards are invisible). That is different from situation here, where every single member of Municipal Parliament has his own guard. Here in Banja Luka streets are closed for every Parliament session. What would happen in Ottawa if they did the same thing?

Vesna Benčević: Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) Vinkovic, Croatia

We also were lucky to be observers at the Liberal Convention. It was a special event where we saw leading people of Canada. At the Convention delegates asked questions to the Ministers and Ministers had to answer questions from their field of authority. I liked the interpreter for deaf and mute participants and for the viewers who watched the Convention on TV. Actually on several places I have noticed examples what can be done in order to help disabled people, deaf and mute people and blind people.

We had a great honour to meet the Prime Minister of Canada, most of leading people, party leaders and prominent representatives of different organizations. We had very interesting meetings with representatives from Canadian Centre For Foreign Policy Development.

Dijana Putar: Croatian Peoples Party(HNS) Varazdin, Croatia

I was impressed by the meeting with Senator Dan Hays, who presented several ways how to raise funds from organizations, friends, people who are familiar with the work of the party, membership, different events. I learned that it is important to explain people the ideas and reasons for fund-raising, and also that it is needed to encourage and include youth in to the work of the party.

However I was impressed most by the Canada Elections. I think something like that should by all means exist in Croatia. That institution exists in order to deal only with election activities. Canada Elections is in charge for voter lists, has an authority to conduct an investigation in case of irregularities and can bring decisions before the court does. They have observers at the polling stations.

Alisa Bijedić, Tuzla, BiH

I would like most to share with the leaders of the political parties in BiH the way that the parties in Canada elect delegates to their national conventions and that every local party member can participate. Another issue, that is the financing of the party from donations

from members-preferably small donations rather than being too reliant on a few major sources of funders. This practice could be applied in BiH.

Lucijana Sterle - (IDS) Opatija, Croatia

Youth and women organizations are very developed in Canada. Politicians do not preach to youth on how they should run the state. Politicians help them and teach them how to lead the sate further. The Prime Minister Chretien in his speech addressed young liberals and he talked about education, offering concrete suggestions.

Dragica Škreblin (LS) Opatija, Croatia

After I settled my impressions I would like to earmark following:

1. "Canada Elections" impressed me. I give the greatest importance to that institution for the high level of political life in Canada. /top limit of the election campaign and entire organization in order to solve election problems, possibility of fraud etc./

2. Level of the public work is extremely high in Canada and the Government consults with citizens in other words it is open for co-operation.

3. Selling the influence is a criminal offence.

4. Donors of the political parties are known in public and they have some privileges when they pay tax.

Slobodan Popovic, (SDSS) Vukovar, Croatia

It was a remarkable idea to connect in such a direct and practical way the political party representatives from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina with political scene of Canada, with its high democratic standards. In this context the remark made by the Canadian Minster of External Affairs was not an exaggeration when he said that everything what we had experienced so intensively in one week, with our eyes and ears wide open, can happen only to few people.

The experience we gained has been useful in various ways. Above all, we should start with a fact that political party representatives from two former Yugoslav countries were brought together in the same time and in the same place. The nature of the situation provided a frame for a normal, spontaneous and free exchange of opinions on all, even the most delicate issues and opened the space for pleasant socializing.

Tihana Kačavenda, NDI Zagreb, Croatia

I had the honour to be a part of this delegation, and my task during this trip was to interpret.

First thing which struck me the most, besides the cold Canadian spring was the openness and transparency of the system. The fact that Canadian Government consults Canadians on all issues speaks enough for itself. Secondly legislative, executive and judiciary bodies of the system are independent from each other and at the same these three bodies control each others work. Also the fact that governmental and nongovernmental organizations and different interest groups have influence to the Government's policy. The most important thing is that the Government responses on the

requests of these groups. In other words the Government listens what people have to say. Third thing is free media which really have a lot of power. The concept of the CBC as a public broadcasting sponsored by the Government and at the same time CBC has a right to criticize that same Government is again strong prove of an open and transparent system.

Advan Repak, Sarajevo, BiH

Political leaders in Canada are continuously in touch with potential voters unlike in BiH. National Institutions are open for people, government employees visit schools, admit people to their offices. Representatives of the ruling party must give answers on the questions raised by the opposition three or four times per week. That is unimaginable in BiH.

Natalija Bukovac SDP -Karlovac, Croatia

We met Mr. Daniel Turp, a member of the Bloc Québécois. Mr. Turp tried to explain us the Quebeckers' wish to separate from Canada. Namely, they plan to go on with referendums until they get 50% + 1 vote when Quebec will be separated from Canada. After the separation they plan to keep certain connections (economic) with Canada. I believe that all of us understood what Quebeckers want and why they want it, but we also know the price we had to pay in order to have independent states. So I think we were competent to give some advice to Mr. Turp before he wins needed number of votes at the referendum.

I was deeply impressed with was Elections Canada, a governmental, non-partisan institution which is financed from the state budget. This organization can get financial resources without approval of the Government which enables Elections Canada to conduct all election related activities in an independent and neutral way. I was fascinated by Elections Canada because of its neutrality from any political party and the will of the Government. That is something we'll have to wait for in Croatia for a long time, same as independent media.

Mladen Popović, Sarajevo, BiH

The things learnt in Canada are too opulent to be put in this report. All the answers represent experiences, which could be applied in BiH in order to raise the political life and democracy in general.

For example, Canada is trying to resolve the Quebec issue by implementing the election results in such a way as no one can be put in jepody and an armed conflict can be prevented.

There are no political parties in Canada based on ethnic or religious grounds and I think this is important. All political parties are civil orientated with programs aimed towards improvement of human rights and social and material well being of citizens.

The Agenda

Sunday March 15, 1998

14:00 Briefing at the Museum of Civilization with Stephen Lee from the Centre for Foreign Development, Ottawa

Monday March 16, 1998

10:00 Briefing at Foreign Affairs with Centre for Foreign Policy Development, Foreign Affairs and CIDA
13:00 Meeting with Reform Party of Canada, Commonwealth Room, Centre Block, House of Commons
14:00 Attendance at Question Period, House of Commons
15:00 Tour of Parliament Buildings
16:30 Meeting with Honourable David Collenette, Minister of Transport
19:00 Volunteer Activism, Liberal Party

Tuesday March 17, 1998

10:00 Meeting with Senator Dan Hays, President Liberal Party of Canada
Tour of East Block, Parliament Hill
12:00 St. Patrick's Day lunch- Tin House Pub
14:00 Meeting with Peter Julian, Organizing Secretary, New Democratic Party
15:00 Meeting and Photos with Prime Minister Chretien
16:15 Meeting with Alexa McDonough, Leader of the New Democratic Party

Wednesday March 18, 1998

9:00 Meeting with Ross Reid, National Director, Progressive Conservative Party
11:00 Meeting with Daniel Turp, Bloc Québécois, West Block, Parliament Hill
12:00 Lunch, Press Gallery, Speaker William Watson, Editor in Chief, Ottawa Citizen
14:00 Meeting at Carleton University School of Journalism
15:00 Ottawa Indian Friendship Centre, Briefing by Bob Groves, Aboriginal Affairs Group
19:00 Hockey Night in Canada: Senators vs. New York Rangers

Thursday March 19, 1998

9:00 Appearance before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Chair: Bill Graham
10:15 Meeting with Anne Roland, Registrar, Supreme Court of Canada
11:30 Meeting with Ron Charles, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
13:00 Registration of delegates for Liberal Convention
13:30 Prime Minister's Speech to Liberal Youth Convention
16:00 Meeting with Randy Pettipaw, Global Affairs Group, Ottawa lobbyist

Friday March 20, 1998

9:00 Meeting with Chief Electoral Officer Kingsley, Elections Canada
10:30 Interview with Mike Trickey, Southam News (see article:Ottawa Citizen March 21, 1998 attached.)
12:30 Lunch and meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy

14:00 Meeting with Harvey Goldberg, Canadian Human Rights Commission
16:00 De briefing with Centre for Foreign Policy Development and CIDA
18:00 Prime Minister Speech to Convention

Saturday March 21, 1998
9:00 NDI workshop at Liberal Convention
11:00 Briefing on Liberal Women's Commission
12:00 Meeting with Terry Mercer, Secretary General Liberal Party and Jack Segall, organizing Secretary, Liberal Party
14:00 Accountability Session with Prime Minister and Cabinet on floor of Liberal convention

Sunday March 22, 1998
11:00 Meeting with Stefan Dion, Minister Responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs
12:00 Meeting with Lord Alderdice, Vice President Liberal International and Leader of the Alliance Party, Northern Ireland

The Delegation

The Croatian Delegation:

1. **Vesna Benčević**,is a member of the HDZ [Croatian Democratic Union]: The ruling party of Franjo Tudjman. The party is rightist and nationalist in orientation and it supports a centralized government. Vesna is 29 years old. She is from Tordinci and currently she lives in Vinkovci and works in the County Government of Vukovarsko Srijemska County. Within the Party Vesna is a Secretary General of HDZ Municipality Organisation Tordinci and is the Secretary General of the Basic Organisation Antin. Vesna has graduated economy from the University of Osijek.

2. **Natalija Bukovec** is a member of the SDP[Social Democratic Party]. The SDP is the main opposition party in Croatia . It is centre left, moderate and modern which has maintained a consistent position on involving women and youth in the political process. Natalija is 23 years old, sociology student from Karlovac and the women's issues co-coordinator of SDP Youth Forum. She is a member of the SDP Youth Forum Main Board and the vice-president of SDP City Organisation Karlovac. Natalija is also active in Feminist Work Group of the Socialist International of the Youth.

3. **Dijana Putar,** is a member of the HNS Croatian People's Party which is a small centralist party which draws much of its membership from small business. Dijana is 24 years old, from Ivanec. Currently Dijana is a Secretary General of the Youth Interest Board for the Varaždin County. Dijana finished Secondary School in Varaždin and plans to continue her education at the University of Zagreb.

4. **Zdeslav Matačić,** is a member of HSLS [Croatian Social Liberal Party] which is a centralist liberal party which has recently split into two parties HSLS and

14:00 Meeting with Harvey Goldberg, Canadian Human Rights Commission
16:00 De briefing with Centre for Foreign Policy Development and CIDA
18:00 Prime Minister Speech to Convention

Saturday March 21, 1998
9:00 NDI workshop at Liberal Convention
11:00 Briefing on Liberal Women's Commission
12:00 Meeting with Terry Mercer, Secretary General Liberal Party and Jack Segall, organizing Secretary, Liberal Party
14:00 Accountability Session with Prime Minister and Cabinet on floor of Liberal convention

Sunday March 22, 1998
11:00 Meeting with Stefan Dion, Minister Responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs
12:00 Meeting with Lord Alderdice, Vice President Liberal International and Leader of the Alliance Party, Northern Ireland

The Delegation

The Croatian Delegation:

1. **Vesna Benčević**,is a member of the HDZ [Croatian Democratic Union]: The ruling party of Franjo Tudjman. The party is rightist and nationalist in orientation and it supports a centralized government. Vesna is 29 years old. She is from Tordinci and currently she lives in Vinkovci and works in the County Government of Vukovarsko Srijemska County. Within the Party Vesna is a Secretary General of HDZ Municipality Organisation Tordinci and is the Secretary General of the Basic Organisation Antin. Vesna has graduated economy from the University of Osijek.

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4. **Zdeslav Matačić,** is a member of HSLS [Croatian Social Liberal Party] which is a centralist liberal party which has recently split into two parties HSLS and

LS (Liberal Party) over the issue of entering into a coalition with the ruling party. The HSLS in several cities has entered into coalitions with HDZ. Zdeslav is a 37 year old from Šibenik, currently he is Secretary of the County Council of HSLS and editor-in-chief of the party newsletter published by the County Organisation. Zdeslav is a party organiser and actively participated in all election campaigns since 1991 at local and national level.

5. **Dragica Škreblin** is a member of LS [Liberal Party]. This party emerged as a result of a split with the HSLS over the issue of entering into a coalition with the HDZ. Prides itself on representing the "real" liberal voice. Dragica is 49 years old from Opatija. Within the Party Dragica is employed as a professional staff member in the Rijeka branch office. In addition she is a party organiser and President of the LS Opatija Branch. Dragica has a Secondary School degree in economy.

6. **Damir Hrastović** is a member of the HSS [Croatian Peasants' Party] which is conservative in orientation and its membership is primarily based in rural Croatia. Damir is 35 years old, a secondary school graduate and student of information sciences from Zagreb. Currently he is a President of HSS Branch Oporovac and Vice-president of HSS Municipal Organisation Dubrava, Zagreb. He also chairs the Zagreb branch of the Braće Radić Fund.

7. **Slobodan Popović** is a member of the SDSS [Independent Democratic Serbian Party] This is a regional party which represents a coalition of Serbian interests in Eastern Slavonia. Slobodan is 46 years old, and was born in Vukovar. Currently he is Secretary General of the party which is based in Vukovar. He has a degree in political sciences from the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Zagreb.

8. **Lucijana Sterle,** is a member of the IDS [Istrian Democratic Assembly]. A regional Party which is the "ruling" for the Istrain peninsula. It is "liberal" in orientation. The party favours decentralization, privatization and minority rights-maintains a Croatian/Italian bilingual policy. Lucijana is a 25 year old from Opatija. She is a President of IDS Opatija Branch, a member of the Presidency of the Association of Branch Offices and a member of the Main Council. Luciana graduated Business school in Vienna.

9. **Tomislav Klauški** is a journalist for Novi List. Novi List is an independent national newspaper which is published in Rijeka. Tomislav is a 26 year old journalist from Zagreb. During his student days he was an Editor-in-Chief of the student magazine "Puls" for 3 years. Tomislav graduated journalism from the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Zagreb. He is a Zagreb correspondent for the Rijeka based independent daily papers "Novi List".

10. **Tihana Kačavenda,** Coordinator, Political Party Program, NDI Zagreb

The Bosnian Delegation

11. **Advan Repak** is a 29 year old from Sarajevo. Advan has a degree in Sociology and is a Television journalist by profession who worked for Television Sarajevo. Prior to his work with the NDI RFC program he was a community activist, having done extensive volunteer work with disabled baseball league.

12. **Mladen Popović** is a 36 year old Electrical Engineer from Montenegro. He was a member of the MOB (Moslem Bosniak Organisation) and was elected to the Municipal Council of Sarajevo. He is a community activist and has worked for a number of different international NGO's. Prior to his work with NDI in the RFC program he was sent to Great Britain by the OSCE to monitor the out of country voting for the Parliamentary elections in Bosnia.

13. **Alisa Ibricić** is a 27 years old from Tuzla. Her background is primarily in business having completed a degree in economics. Prior to her work with NDI in the RFC program, she, with the support of Oxfam developed and implemented a program for the disabled and homeless in Tuzla.

14. **Danijela Dabić** is originally from Zagreb. She is a 22 year old and now lives and works in Banja Luka. She completed her BA in English Language and Literature. She organised youth Theatre and has taught English part time . Prior to working for NDI in the RFC program, Danijela worked as a program co-coordinator for the NDI political party program in Banja Luka. In that role she served as translator.

15. **Tanja Kremenović** is a 25 year old former television journalist from Banja Luka. She completed her studies in the Teacher Academy and taught grammar school. Tanja worked at the private TV station CIMC in Banja Luka . Prior to working for NDI in the RFC program she was a moderator for political debates, political round table discussions and interviews for CIME.

16. **Vanja Malidžan** is a 26 Television journalist also from CIMC in Banja Luka working specifically covering local and national politics and sports. He is a electrical Engineering student. Prior to his work as a RFC in the NDI program, Vanja was a political commentator.

17. **Predrag Bajović** is a 26 year old freelance journalist from Banja Luka who writes for the local newspaper in Banja Luka as well as for the Sarajevo News Agency SAFAX and biweekly "Dani". He has a degree in Sociology and in addition he is information officer in NDI Banja Luka.

Thanks

All people we met were kind and obliging, and I would like to use this opportunity to thank Ambassador Smith and other people who made this wonderful and educational trip happen.
Vesna Benèeviæ

I'd like to use this opportunity to thank the entire NDI team, especially Karen Gainer and Tihana Kaèavenda and also to thank the Canadian Government and Ambassador Smith.
Dijana Putar

Thanks to Karen Gainer and Ambassador Smith I had a great opportunity to attend the Convention of the Liberal Party in Ottawa. For me it was a special event because I am a member of the Liberal Party and I was able to get answers on the range of questions and dilemmas concerning organization, construction, building and work and fund-raising of the Party. Meetings and talks to other parties was of a great importance too. Once more many thanks to Canada and its lovely hosts Mr. Lee and his associates, Ambassador Smith, Karen and NDI.
Dragica Skreblin

And I'd like to thank Karen Gainer, a person without whom all this would have never happened.
Slobodan Popovic

I am especially grateful to Mr. Steven Lee who encouraged us to express our suggestions and examples to motivate the Canadian Government to engage more in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to help solve numerous problems these two countries are facing.
Zdeslav Matacic

Thanks to NDI, Canadian Embassy and Canadian Government we went to the capital of Canada, Ottawa. First, it is Ministry of Foreign Affairs which in my opinion put great effort in order to make our visit to Ottawa so educational. They did their job in a very systematic manner so our first and last meetings were with them. At the first meeting we were briefed on various aspects of Canada and Canadian political life we could pay attention to. The last meeting provided us with opportunity to show what we had seen, learned and how we would apply what we learned in our country. It was also an opportunity to ask for Canadian help in conducting projects which are missing in our countries.
Natalija Bukovac

I would like to use this opportunity and thank all people who worked very hard on this trip. Thank you all.
Tihana Kačavenda

Appendix 1

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Meeting No. 40

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1998

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade met informally at 9:10 o'clock a.m., this day, in Room 371 of the West Block, the Chair, Bill Graham, presiding.

Members of the Committee present: Colleen Beaumier, Bill Graham, Raymonde Folco, Gurmant Grewal, Ted McWhinney, Bob Mills, Julian Reed, Daniel Turp.

Other Member present: Janko Peric.

In attendance: From the Parliamentary Research Branch of the Library of Parliament: James Lee and Gerald Schmitz, Research Officers.

Members of the Delegation: *From the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs:* Karen Gainer, Field Director, Zagreb. *From Croatia:* Natalija Bukovac, Karlovac, member of SDF(Social Democratic Party); Luciana Sterle, Opatija, member of IDS (Istrian Democratic Assembly); Dijana Putar, Ivanac, member of HNS (Croatian People's Party); Dragica Skreblin, Opatija, member of LS (Liberal Party); Vesna Bencevic, Tordinci, member of HDZ (Croatian Democratic Party) Damir Hrastovic, Zagreb, member of HSS (Croatian Peasent Party); Slobodan Popovic, Vukovar, member of the SDSS (Independent Democratic Serbian Party); Zdeslav Matacic, Sibenik, member of HSLS (Croatian Social Liberal Party); Tomislav Klauski, Zagreb, journalist - Novi List Daily. *From Bosnia and Herzegovina:* Advan Repak, Sarajevo - Federation; Mladen Popovic, Sarajevo - Federation; Alisa Ibricic, Tuzla - Federation; Danijela Dabic, Banja Luka - Republic Srpska; Tanja Kremenovic, Banja Luka - Republic Srpska; Vanja Malidzan, Banja Luka - Republic Srpska; Predrag Bajovic, Banja Luka - Republic Srpska.
In accordance with its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee proceeded to meet with a delegation from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Karen Gainer introduced the delegation and made an opening statement and, with other members of the delegation, answered questions.

At 9:58 o'clock a.m., the Vice-Chair Bob Mills, took the Chair.

At 10:10 o'clock a.m., the Committee adjourned to the call of the Chair.

Janice Hilchie
Clerk of the Committee

Yugoslav survivors see danger in separatist talk

BY MIKE TRICKEY

From the bloody remains of the former Yugoslavia, the Canadian parliamentary system of settling disputes by debate rather than by gun looks pretty good.

A first-hand look from the visitors' gallery of the House of Commons makes it appear even better to a delegation of young democrats and journalists from the region.

But proximity to the debate gives no understanding whatsoever to those who have survived the bloodiest European war in 50 years — a war rooted in ethnic and cultural division —about how Canada can continue to tear itself apart over flags and independence.

"We have a lot of experience with these kinds of questions," says Slobodan Popovic of shattered Vukovar, a once-picturesque city reduced to ruin in a bloody orgy of ethnic slaughter by Serbs and Croats in 1991.

"What has emerged for me as the key question is, is it necessary for each nation to have its own state?

"I don't think so. To have a state of your own is not the only way for a nation to develop."

Though they disagree with the motives of separatists and those who would wield the flag for political purposes, the Yugoslavs visiting here on the ticket of the National Democratic Institute, an organization dedicated to spreading democracy to former Soviet Bloc countries, are awestruck that the debate can continue peacefully.

Danijela Dabic lives in the deeply divided Serb-dominated city of Banja Luka in Bosnia.

"What has been really impressive for me is that, even though you've had this long discussion over Quebec and the flag, there is still the commitment to a democratic approach to try to resolve it. We never had a chance to discuss these things in our country."

And it is that continued commitment to discourse and civility that has her questioning why Quebec would want to leave.

"It seems to us that the French people in Canada have all the rights of everybody else," says Ms. Dabic. "Even after meeting with the Bloc Québécois members of Parliament, I still wasn't given one good reason for separation. They want to be in Canada, but out of it. They want to use the Canadian dollar and the Canadian passport. It's very difficult to understand."

The Balkan delegation also saw some danger in the flag debate, which they watched from the galleries.

Tihana Kacavenda of Zagreb said flags can be powerful symbols, noting how the fascist Ustashi checkerboard adopted by Croatia and the symbols of the anti-Catholic Chetniks adopted by Serbia rekindled deep and fearful memories across the borders.

Sarajevo's Mladen Popovic says Canadians and Québécois would do well to step back and look at the experience of Bosnia.

"When we first gained our independence, everybody was so proud, but that soon changed. Life became very difficult. The economy was bad, people were restricted from travelling because of passport problems. And then people from the different nationalities started moving from one territory to another, to be with their own."

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125 Sussex Drive
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Attention: Steven Lee

Dear Steven;

Canada Trip Report

At long last here is our report from the trip to Ottawa in March. We apologize for the great delay in getting this to you. Both Sarah and I have been pulled by our respective programs and unfortunately this ended up on the back burner.

On behalf of the delegation we would like to thank you for making this trip possible. There is no doubt that your Centre greatly impressed the delegation as did the openness of the system in general - from the politicians themselves, and in particular the Prime Minister - to the buildings themselves- the fact that the House of Commons was filled with school children.

As team leaders we enjoyed the fact that no matter who we spoke to, everyone each in their own way reinforced the principles we try to teach here in the region: that democracy is a process that needs continual and careful nurturing; political parties need to constantly be in touch with their voters, and that good public policy requires consultation with citizens.

In the end we both were grateful that you were able to provide a "working laboratory of democratic behavior" which our delegates were able to learn from. As you read their accounts of the trip you can see for yourself how the Canadian approach to democracy touched each member of the delegation and in a real way changed how they think about democracy.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Gainer & Sarah Jenkins